

To help ensure that you and your family enjoy a safe summer while outdoors, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health offers these suggestions:

Mosquitoes

Following a warm and wet spring, mosquitoes are very active. Protect yourself from bites and possible disease infection by following these tips:

Use insect repellents that contain DEET, picaridin, or lemon eucalyptus oil.

Apply repellents 15 to 20 minutes before going outdoors and routinely reapply them as necessary.

Try to limit or avoid outdoor activities between dusk to dawn as mosquitos are active and biting during that period.

Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, shoes and socks whenever possible.

To eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites near your home:

Remove all unused tires and other containers that may hold water, such as buckets, tin cans and unused flower pots.

Empty bird baths and refill on a regular basis

Eliminate any areas of standing water on your property and make sure all roof gutters are clean and draining properly.

Clean and chlorinate all pools and outdoor hot tubs.

Drain any standing water on pool covers.

Pools and hot tubs should be kept well covered and preferably empty when not in use.

Food Safety

Keep cold foods refrigerated or in a cooler with ice to maintain them at a temperature of 41°F or less.

Keep hot foods at a temperature of 135°F or more.

Discard any perishable food that has been sitting out for longer than 2 hours. Food left out at room temperature can experience bacterial growth and should be discarded. Thermometers are inexpensive and can help prevent foodborne disease. Don't rely on how cold or hot a food item "feels".

Cook your hamburgers to 160°F or until there is no pink in the center.

Consider healthy alternatives for your picnic this year such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

Visit "*The Picnic Site*" for ideas at <http://www.the-picnic-site.com/healthy-picnic.html>.

Keep a bottle of hand sanitizer available to use before you eat and after using the restroom if soap and running water is not available. Make sure children wash their hands after playing outdoors.

Heat Safety

During hot weather, it is important to increase your fluid intake regardless of your activity level. Avoid alcoholic beverages which actually cause you to lose more fluid.

When working or exercising in hot weather, always remember to pace yourself. Start slowly, gradually pick up the pace and don't over exert yourself.

Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing when possible. Also remember to wear a wide-brimmed hat to help keep your head cool.

To reduce the risk of sunburn, limit outdoor activities during daylight hours when the sun's strength is at its peak. When outdoors, use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 or higher and reapply as directed on the container.

Water Safety

Swim only in approved areas and never swim alone. When at the beach or a pool, swim near a lifeguard whenever possible. Lifeguards are trained not only in injury prevention, but also in emergency response. Should anything go wrong, a lifeguard can help make the difference between life and death.

Never leave children alone in or near the pool or at the beach, even for a moment. Drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children ages one to four in the United States and the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths to children ages 14 and under.

Teach your children how to swim or enroll them in swimming classes. A variety of organizations, like the YMCA, typically offer swimming lessons at a location near you. When swimming at a pool, carefully observe all depth markings and do not dive head first. Diving increases your risk of serious injury, particularly if the pool isn't deep enough.

Keep rescue equipment such as a shepherd's hook - a long pole with a hook on the end - a life preserver, and a telephone near the pool.

Don't swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for children and infants in diapers. You can spread germs into the water and make other people sick.

Make sure your pool is clear, that your filtration system is working properly and that the proper amount of chlorine is present in the pool water.

For additional information, please contact the Cuyahoga County Board of Health at 216-201-2000 or visit our web site at www.ccbh.net.